(c) the number of steel plants working in their full capacity;

(d) whether steel plants in private sector have more capacity than the public sector; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF STEEL (SHRI SONTOSH MOHAN DEV): (a) The total number of steel plants, in operation, in the country is as under:-

(i) In Public Sector.....9 plants

(ii) In Private Sector.....

(a) one integrated steel plant

(b) 169 mini steel plants in the secondary sector.

(b) Two

(c) Nil

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise in view of (d) above.

Appointment of Ambassadors and High Commissioners

5143. SHRI M. RAMANNA RAI: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the qualifications and the criteria laid down for the appointment of Ambassadors and High Commissioners; and

(b) whether all of them are of same status?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) Appointments of Ambassadors and High Commissioners are made by the Government of India at its discretion from amongst the officers of Indian Foreign Service or eminent non-officials.

(b) While there is no difference in status of the Ambassador as far as the receiving State is concerned, for our own administrative purposes, Ambassadors do have classification according to their seniority is service or in the case of non-IFS Ambassadors as decided by the Government.

Metering of Local Telephone Calls in Delhi and Bombay

5144. SHRI RAJENDRA KUMAR SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have received any proposal from MTNL for metering of all local calls from electronic exchanges in Delhi and Bombay periodically every three minutes;

(b) if so, whether telephone consumers have given any representation in protest against this proposal; and

(c) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P.V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Yes, Sir. A few representations from the telephone users have been received.

(c) The proposal of charging local calls on three minute basis is under the consideration of the Government. No decision has been taken as yet.